



NEWS

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SUPERVISOR POSTMUS AND MAYOR DALE ASK FEDERAL PANEL NOT TO DOWNSCALE BARSTOW MARINE BASE

BARSTOW – San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus and Barstow Mayor Lawrence Dale will testify at the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) Southern California regional hearing to be held in Los Angeles tomorrow.

Both Postmus and Dale have been working in a joint effort with state and federal representatives to avoid the potential loss of hundreds of jobs at the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Barstow. The job losses could come as a result of the May 13, 2005 announcement by the Pentagon that the base is proposed for realignment and downsizing. The Department of Defense recommendation proposes the elimination of 409 jobs and estimates the loss of an additional 387 ancillary jobs as a result of fewer dollars flowing into the community.

“The elimination of nearly 800 jobs is totally unacceptable and we hope to convince the BRAC Commission that the DoD’s analysis of the base for realignment is flawed to the point that it should be removed from the BRAC list,” Supervisor Postmus said.

“Testifying at the BRAC hearing is the best way available to us to fight to save these jobs and preserve the vital mission of the base,” Mayor Dale said. “We have been working with Supervisor Postmus analyzing documents regarding the proposed base realignment. As a result of our analysis, we feel strongly that the DoD substantially deviated from its own criteria in the analysis of the base. I believe we have a very good case to prove our point.”

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BRAC HEARING
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Eight criteria have been established by Congress to analyze the future needs of the country's military force structure. These criteria give paramount importance to an installation's military value. "The DoD's recommendations, if accepted, would have such substantial negative impacts on the combat-readiness and combat-effectiveness of the United States Marine Corps as to constitute a substantial deviation from the military value criteria established for this 2005 BRAC process," Supervisor Postmus said.

Other considerations include economic and environmental impacts of potential changes on the communities surrounding bases. To estimate the impact on the supposed "local economic area," the DoD compared the number of jobs estimated to be lost at MCLB Barstow to the total employment base of the entire San Bernardino-Riverside-Ontario, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area – a geographical area that covers more than 27,000 square miles, with a total population of nearly 4 million.

"Barstow is a rural city with its own economic base. Clearly, the only reasonable way to measure the economic impact of the recommended job loss is to compare it to the employment base of Barstow and not to the entire Inland Empire," Supervisor Postmus said.

In order to remove a base from the BRAC list, five of the nine BRAC Commissioners must be convinced that substantial deviations from the criteria exist. The BRAC commission may add bases to, or subtract bases from, the list submitted by DoD.

Written testimony will be received by the BRAC Commission until mid August. However, oral testimony can only be offered on July 14th when the Commission meets at Westchester High School in Los Angeles.